What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for facilitating instant failover during packet routing by employing a flooding protocol to send packets between a source and a destination, the method comprising:

receiving a packet containing data at an intermediate node located between the source and the destination;

wherein the packet is received from a first neighboring node;

determining whether the packet has been seen before at the intermediate node; and

if the packet has not been seen before, forwarding the packet to neighboring nodes of the intermediate node.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein forwarding the packet to neighboring needs involves forwarding the packet to all neighboring nodes except the first neighboring node from which the packet was received.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein determining whether the packet has been seen before involves examining a sequence number, S_R, contained within the packet to determine whether the sequence number has been seen before.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the sequence number includes one of:

a sequence number inserted into a payload of the packet;

a sequence number located within an Internet Protocol (IP) header of the packet; and

a sequence number located within a layer 4 header of the packet.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein examining the sequence number involves looking up a highest received sequence number, S_H, stored at the intermediate node based upon the source of the packet.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein examining the sequence number involves looking up a highest received sequence number, S_H, stored at the intermediate node based upon the source and the destination of the packet.

7. The method of claim 3, wherein determining whether the packet has been seen before involves examining a record, R, indicating which of N possible sequence numbers preceding a highest received sequence number, S_H, have been seen before.

8. The method of claim 3, wherein determining whether the packet has been seen before involves:

looking up a highest received sequence number, S_H;

if $S_R > S_H$,

overwriting S_H with S_R,

updating a record, R, indicating which of N possible sequence numbers preceding S_H have been seen before, and

forwarding the packet to the neighboring nodes;

if $S_H - N > S_R$, discarding the packet; and

if $S_H \geq S_R \geq S_H - N$, then

if R indicates that S_R has been seen before, discarding the packet, and

if R indicates the packet has not been seen before,

updating R to indicate that S_R has been seen, and

forwarding the packet to the neighboring nodes.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the record, R, is a bit vector of size N.

10. A computer-readable storage medium storing instructions that when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a method for facilitating instant failover during packet routing by employing a flooding protocol to send packets between a source and a destination, the method comprising:

receiving a packet containing data at an intermediate node located between the source and the destination;

wherein the packet is received from a first neighboring node;

determining whether the packet has been seen before at the intermediate node; and

if the packet has not been seen before, forwarding the packet to neighboring nodes of the intermediate node.

11. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 10, wherein forwarding the packet to neighboring needs involves forwarding the packet to all neighboring nodes except the first neighboring node from which the packet was received.

12. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 10, wherein determining whether the packet has been seen before involves examining a sequence number, S_R, contained within the packet to determine whether the sequence number has been seen before.

13. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein the sequence number includes one of:

a sequence number inserted into a payload of the packet;

a sequence number located within an Internet Protocol (IP) header of the packet; and

a sequence number located within a layer 4 header of the packet.

14. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein examining the sequence number involves looking up a highest received sequence number, S_H, stored at the intermediate node based upon the source of the packet.

15. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein examining the sequence number involves looking up a highest received sequence number, S_H, stored at the intermediate node based upon the source and the destination of the packet.

16. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein determining whether the packet has been seen before involves examining a record, R, indicating which of N possible sequence numbers preceding a highest received sequence number, S_H, have been seen before.

17. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein determining whether the packet has been seen before involves:

looking up a highest received sequence number, S_H;

if $S_R > S_H$,

overwriting S_H with S_R,

updating a record, R, indicating which of N possible sequence numbers preceding S_H have been seen before, and

forwarding the packet to the neighboring nodes;

if $S_H - N > S_R$, discarding the packet; and

if $S_H \geq S_R \geq S_H - N$, then

if R indicates that S_R has been seen before, discarding the packet, and

if R indicates the packet has not been seen before,

updating R to indicate that S_R has been seen, and

forwarding the packet to the neighboring nodes.

18. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 17, wherein the record, R, is a bit vector of size N.

19. An apparatus that facilitates instant failover during packet routing by employing a flooding protocol to send packets between a source and a destination, the apparatus comprising:

a receiving mechanism that is configured to receive a packet containing data at an intermediate node located between the source and the destination;

wherein the packet is received from a first neighboring node;

a determination mechanism that is configured to determine whether the packet has been seen before at the intermediate node; and

a forwarding mechanism that is configured to forward the packet to neighboring nodes of the intermediate node if the packet has not been seen before.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the forwarding mechanism is configured to forward the packet to all neighboring nodes except the first neighboring node from which the packet was received.

21. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the determination mechanism is configured to examine a sequence number, S_R, contained within the packet to determine whether the sequence number has been seen before.

22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the sequence number includes one of:

a sequence number inserted into a payload of the packet;

a sequence number located within an Internet Protocol (IP) header of the packet; and

a sequence number located within a layer 4 header of the packet.

23. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the determination mechanism is configured to look up a highest received sequence number, S_H, stored at the intermediate node based upon the source of the packet.

24. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the determination mechanism is configured to look up a highest received sequence number, S_H, stored at the intermediate node based upon the source and the destination of the packet.

25. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the determination mechanism is configured to examine a record, R, indicating which of N possible sequence numbers preceding a highest received sequence number, S_H, have been seen before.

26. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the determination mechanism is configured to:

look up a highest received sequence number, S_H;

if $S_R > S_H$, to

overwrite S_H with S_R,

update a record, R, indicating which of N possible sequence numbers preceding S_H have been seen before, and to

forward the packet to the neighboring nodes;

if $S_H - N > S_R$, to discard the packet; and

if $S_H \geq S_R \geq S_H - N$, to

discard the packet, if R indicates that S_R has been seen before, and to

update R to indicate that S_R has been seen, and to forward the packet to the neighboring nodes, if R indicates the packet has not been seen before.

27. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the record, R, is a bit vector of size N.